Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan
Executive
Council

Communications
Coordination
Unit

130 Walter Scott Building
3085 Albert Street
Regina, Canada
S4S 0B1

Government of Saskatchewan

Public Opinion Polling and Market Research

from January 1, 2001 to March 31, 2001

Acid-free Paper

Government of Saskatchewan

Public Opinion Polling and Market Research

from January 1, 2001 to March 31, 2001

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Department/Crown commissioning the work:

Executive Council

Date:	January, 2001
Supplier:	**Fast & Associates, Saskatoon**
Cost:	**$22,500**

Omnibus
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

Prepared for:

Saskatchewan Executive Council
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Regina, Saskatchewan
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January 2001

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Federal issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, federal taxes and jobs and unemployment.
- Provincial issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, agriculture, provincial taxes and jobs and unemployment.
- The majority of residents approve of the way Saskatchewan's provincial government is handling the policing of communities.
- The large majority consider violence within the family an important public issue that should be considered a criminal action and be subject to the laying of criminal charges by police.
- More than two thirds of residents think the education system in Saskatchewan is the same or better than that of the rest of the country.
- The large majority of Saskatchewan residents think the quality of elementary and secondary education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better.
- The majority of residents think high school students are prepared for entering post-secondary institutions; just under one half think high school students are prepared for entering the workforce.
- The large majority think they are at least somewhat knowledgeable about which health care services are paid for in full or in part by Saskatchewan Health.
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents rate the quality of health care services they or their family members have received in the past 12 months as either excellent or good.
- Few Saskatchewan residents are familiar with the Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation (SOCO), Innovation Place or the Regina Research Park.
- The large majority of residents agree that candidates seeking election to any municipal government position should be required to disclose the sources of their campaign contributions as well as how those contributions were spent and that there should be limits set on the amount of money that can be raised or spent on municipal elections.
- Almost one half of Saskatchewan residents think the number of people receiving welfare in the province has been increasing over the last four years.
- The large majority of Saskatchewan residents approve of programs for low-income families to make it easier for them to stay working and avoid falling back onto welfare.

METHODOLOGY

Doug Fast & Associates was retained by the Government of Saskatchewan to conduct the January 2001 public opinion survey with a representative sample of the Saskatchewan population. The January Omnibus Survey contains questions designed to explore public opinion regarding:

- federal issues of importance to Saskatchewan residents;
- provincial issues of importance to Saskatchewan residents;
- the justice system;
- women's secretariat;
- education;
- health care;
- Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation;
- municipal affairs; and
- social services.

The questions for the survey were provided by Saskatchewan Executive Council and assembled into an interview format by Doug Fast & Associates. The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure that all of the questions being asked in the interview were understood by the general public and the information being gathered addressed the public opinion research objectives.

The sample frame for this public opinion research survey was constructed to obtain complete interviews from a random sample of 1,000 households throughout Saskatchewan. To ensure proportionate representation from all areas of Saskatchewan, the province was divided into nine geographic sampling districts. Interview respondents were selected randomly from Saskatchewan telephone directories in each region using standard polling practices to ensure random selection of households and respondents. The sampling frame was also constructed to ensure proportionate representation of other important demographic characteristics evident within the provincial population such as gender, age, occupation, level of education and level of household income. This ensures that the opinions of all the various types of people who reside in Saskatchewan are proportionately represented in the statistical measurements documented in this report.

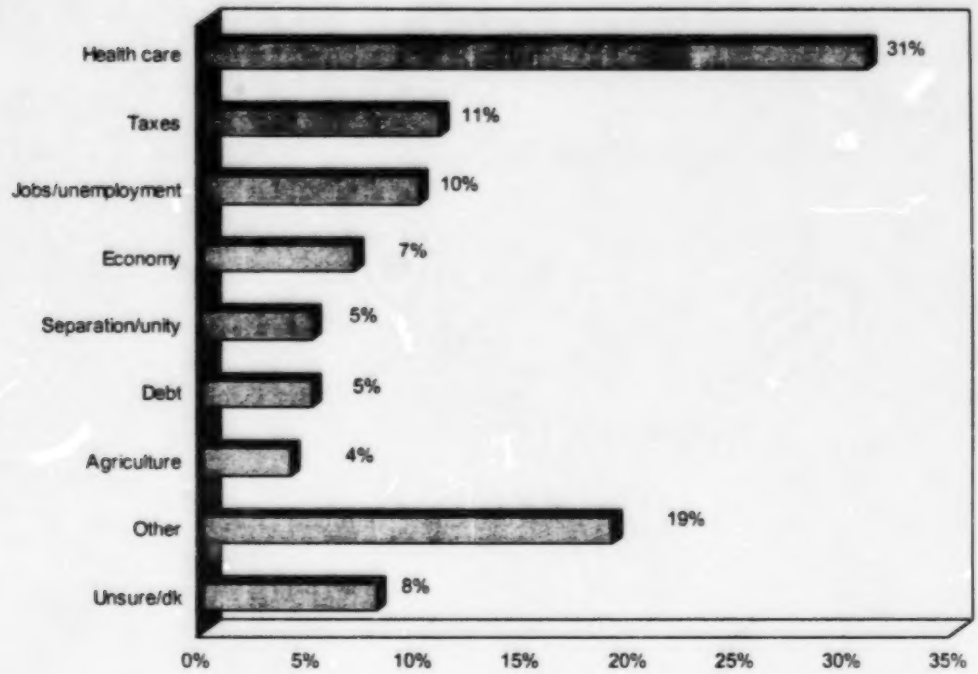
One thousand residents of the province were interviewed between Wednesday, January 17 and Monday, January 29, 2001. Interviews were conducted by telephone at times that were appropriate and convenient for respondents - weekdays between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. and weekends between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. All interviews were conducted by Doug Fast & Associates' in-house public opinion interviewers using our *Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing* (CATI) call centre.

The Omnibus survey sample size of 1,000 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points: reliable results with low variability. Frequency charts for all public opinion issues are illustrated in this report.

Doug Fast & Associates designed and implemented programs to facilitate the statistical analysis of data using the industry standard SPSS computer program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Data checking procedures were utilized at all times to ensure accuracy of the data. In addition, statistical tests were conducted on the demographics to check for reliability and validity of the survey data.

1.0 GENERAL ISSUES

Question 1. In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Canada today?

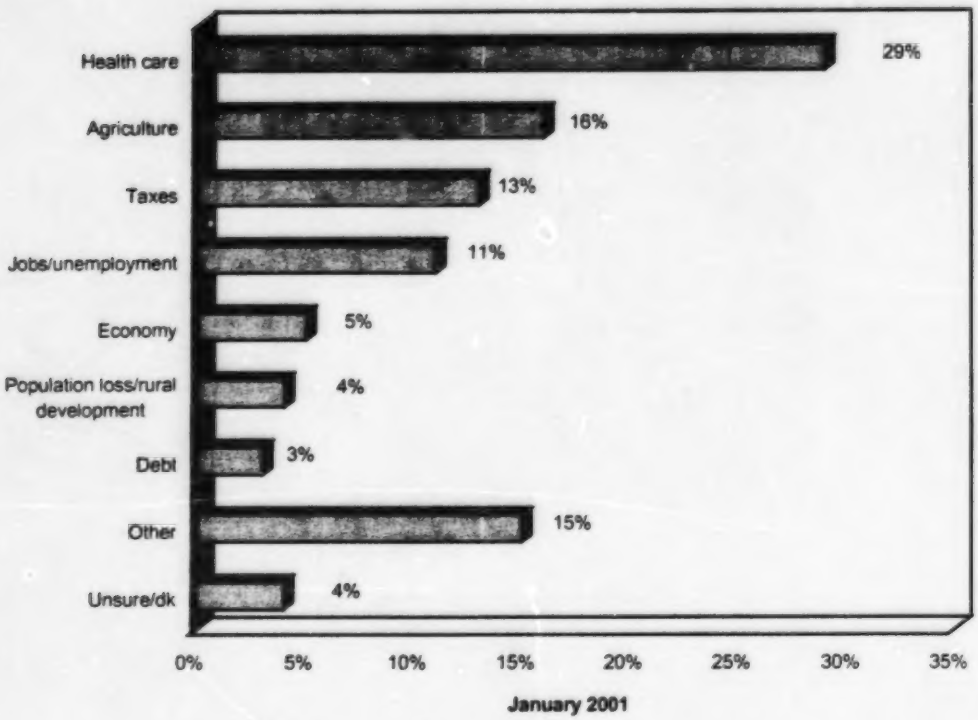


January 2001

- According to 31% of Saskatchewan residents, the most important issue facing Canada today is the health care system. Other important issues include federal taxes (11%), jobs and unemployment (10%), the economy (7%), national unity (5%), the national deficit and accumulated debt (5%) and agriculture (4%).

- Approximately 19% of respondents are primarily concerned with 'other' issues such as the federal government in general (3%), western alienation (3%), crime and poverty (2%), education (2%) and the environment (2%).

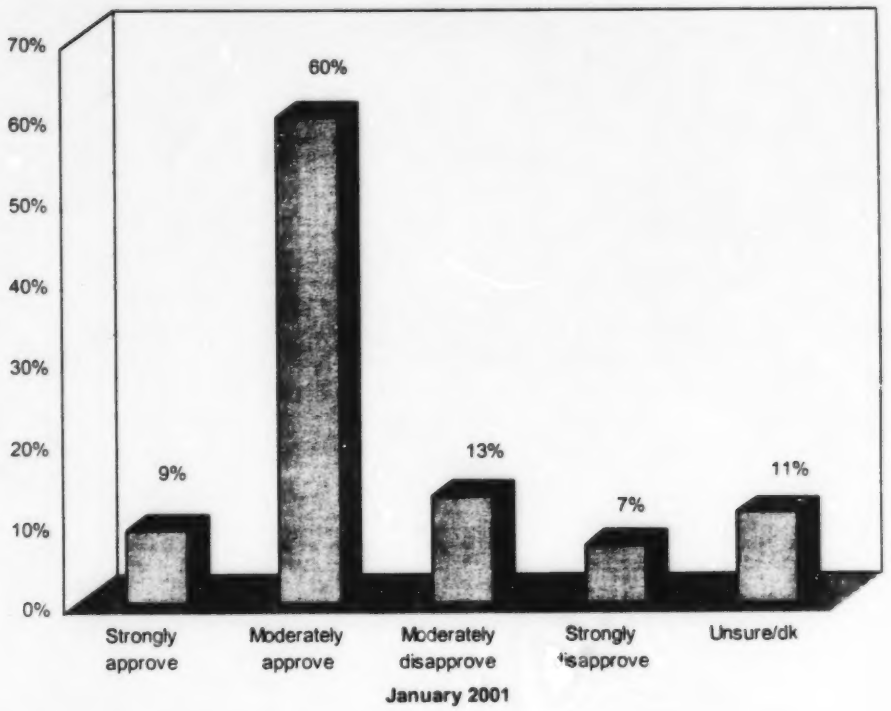
Question 2. What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?



- The most important issue facing the province today, according to 29% of Saskatchewan residents, is health care. Approximately 16% of residents are concerned primarily with agriculture, 13% with provincial taxes, 11% with jobs and unemployment and 5% are primarily concerned with the provincial economy.

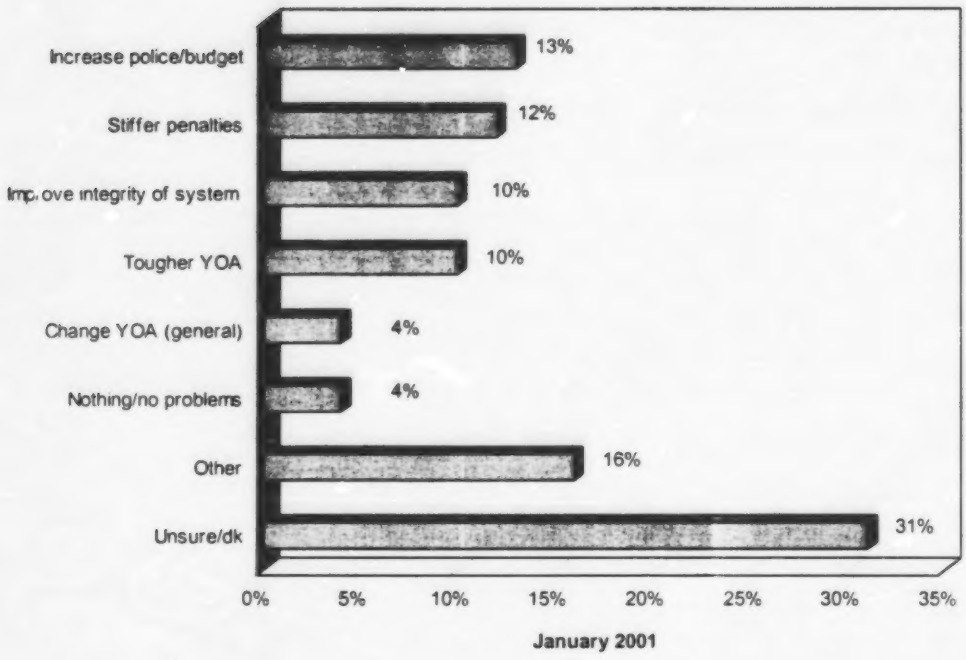
- Included among 'other' important issues identified by 15% of respondents are the provincial government in general (3%), highways and transportation (2%), education (2%) and fuel prices (1%).

Question 3. Generally speaking, do you strongly approve, moderately approve, moderately disapprove or strongly disapprove of the way Saskatchewan's provincial government is handling the policing of communities?



- More than two thirds (69%) of residents approve of the way Saskatchewan's provincial government is handling the policing of communities.

Question 4. What would you like to see changed about the way the Saskatchewan provincial government manages policing and the justice system?

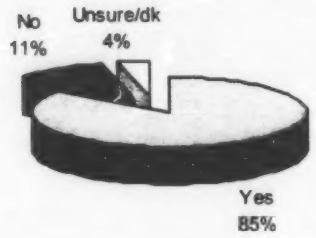


- Approximately 13% of Saskatchewan residents would like the government to increase the budget and hire more police, 12% would like stiffer penalties for offenders, 10% mention improving the integrity of the justice system and another 10% would like a tougher young offenders act.

- About 16% of respondents mention 'other' changes they would like to see in the justice system such as monitoring abuse in the system (3%), increasing communications with communities (3%), dealing with Native issues more effectively (3%) and increasing social programs (2%).

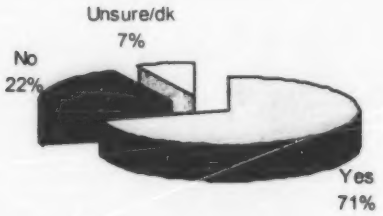
3.0 WOMEN'S SECRETARIAT

Question 5. Is violence within the family, in other words, physical, financial or sexual abuse of another family member, an important public issue in your view?



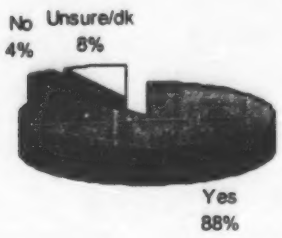
- The large majority (85%) of Saskatchewan residents consider violence within the family an important public issue.

Question 6. Do you think the public at large believes that violence within the family is an important issue to Saskatchewan people?



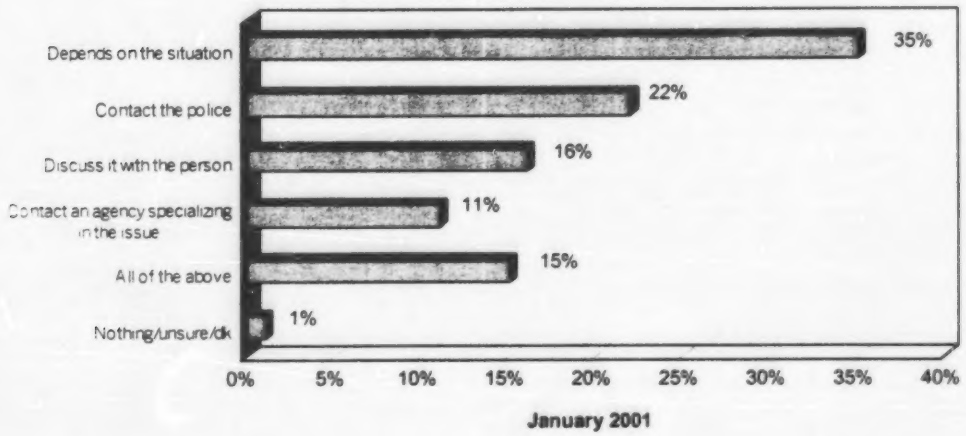
- Just more than two thirds (71%) of residents, however, think the public at large believes that violence in the family is an important issue to Saskatchewan people.

Question 7. Do you think acts of violence within the family are criminal actions and should be subject to the laying of criminal charges by police?



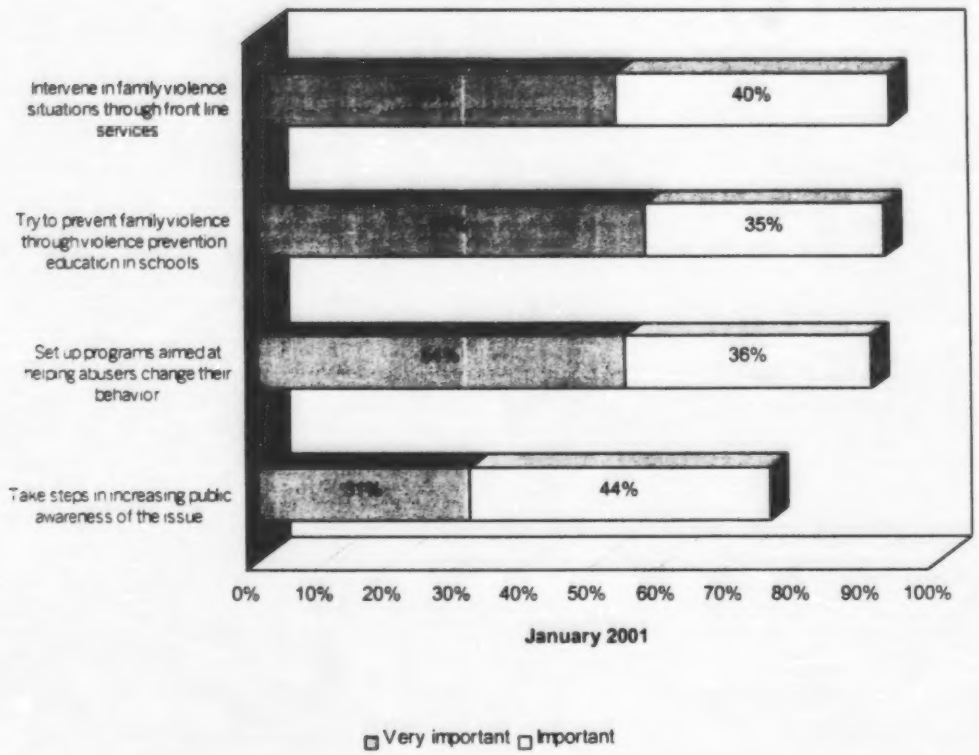
- The large majority (88%) of Saskatchewan residents think acts of violence within the family are criminal actions and should be subject to the laying of criminal charges by police.

Question 8. What action would you take if you knew that a friend, neighbour or family member was involved in an act of violence within their family?



- More than one third (35%) of residents indicate the action they would take if they knew of someone involved in an act of violence within their family would depend on the situation, 22% would contact the police and 16% would discuss the situation with the person involved.

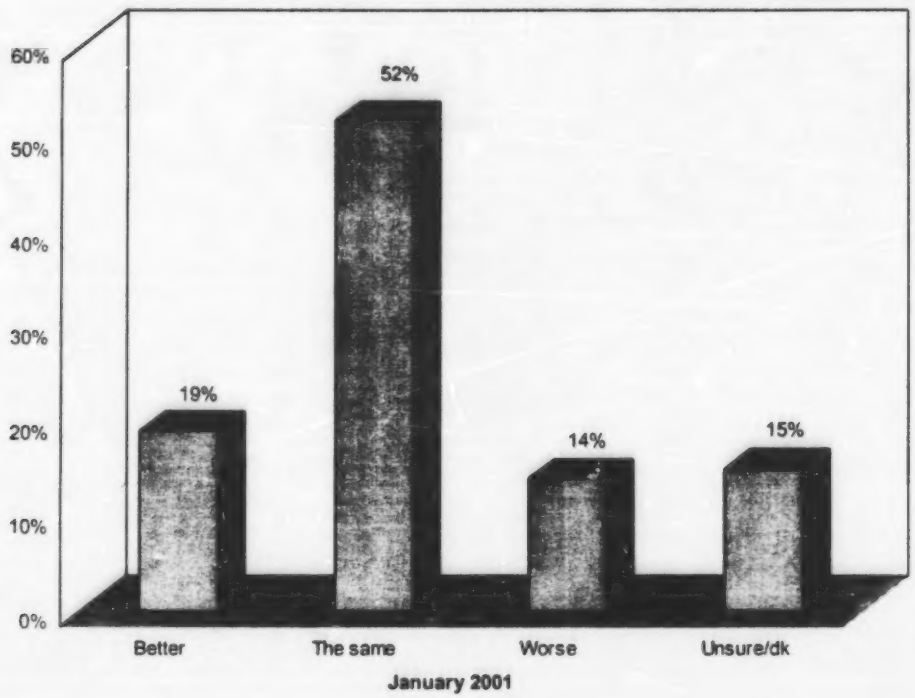
Question 9. How important is it that Saskatchewan's provincial government...


Intervene in family violence situations through front line services
40%
Try to prevent family violence through violence prevention education in schools
35%
Set up programs aimed at helping abusers change their behavior
36%
Take steps in increasing public awareness of the issue
44%
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
January 2001
Very important
Important

- The large majority of Saskatchewan residents think it is important that action be taken to intervene in family violence situations through frontline services (93%), prevent family violence through prevention education in schools (92%), set up programs to help abusers change their behavior (90%) and increase public awareness of the issue (75%).

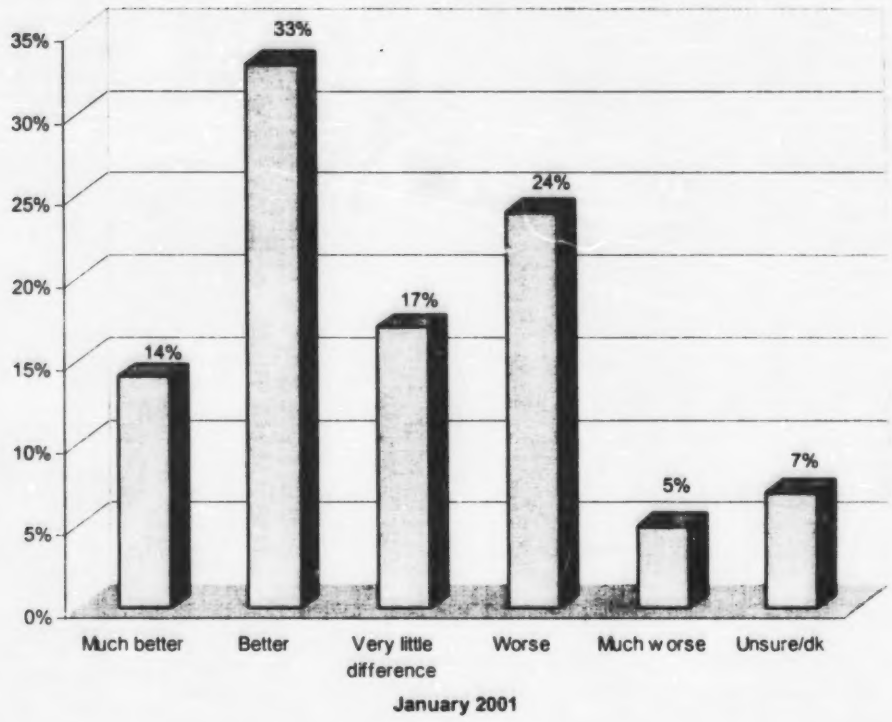
4.0 EDUCATION

Question 10. Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the education system in Saskatchewan is better, the same or worse?



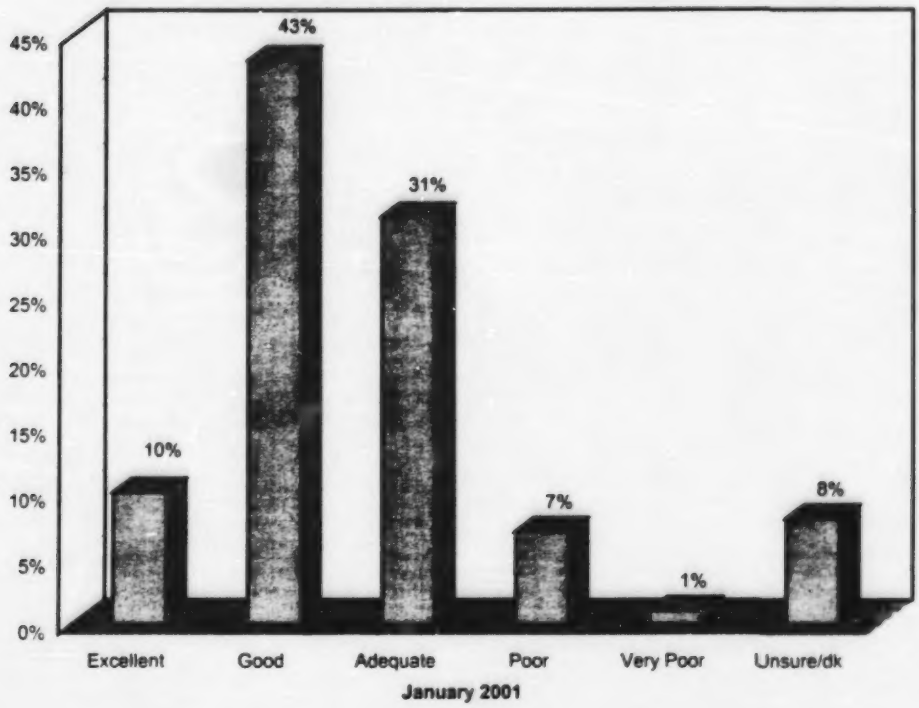
- More than two thirds (71%) of residents think the education system in Saskatchewan is the same or better than that of the rest of the country.

Question 11. When you think of your own school education, do you believe students' education today is much better, better, worse, much worse or very little different compared to yours?



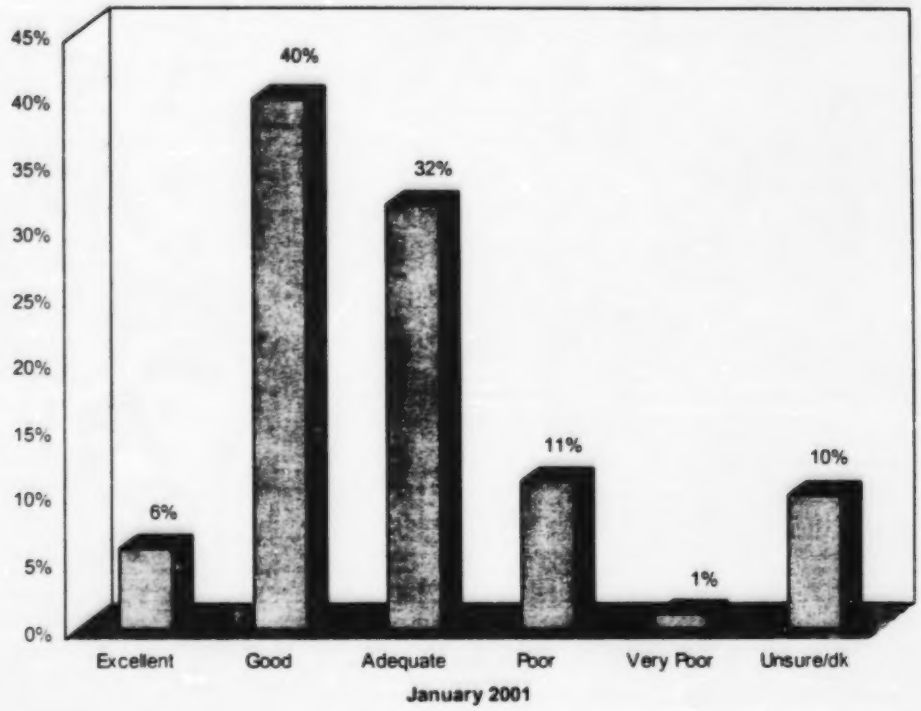
- Almost one half (47%) of Saskatchewan residents believe students' education today is better than the education they received; 17% believe there is very little difference.

Question 12. Do you think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



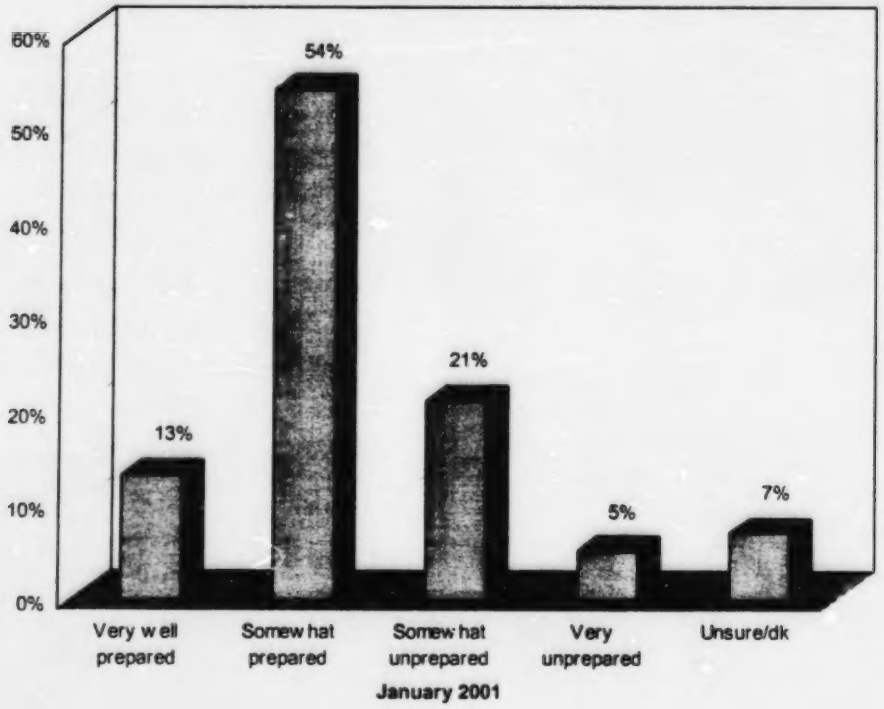
- The large majority (84%) of Saskatchewan residents think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better.

Question 13. Do you think that the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



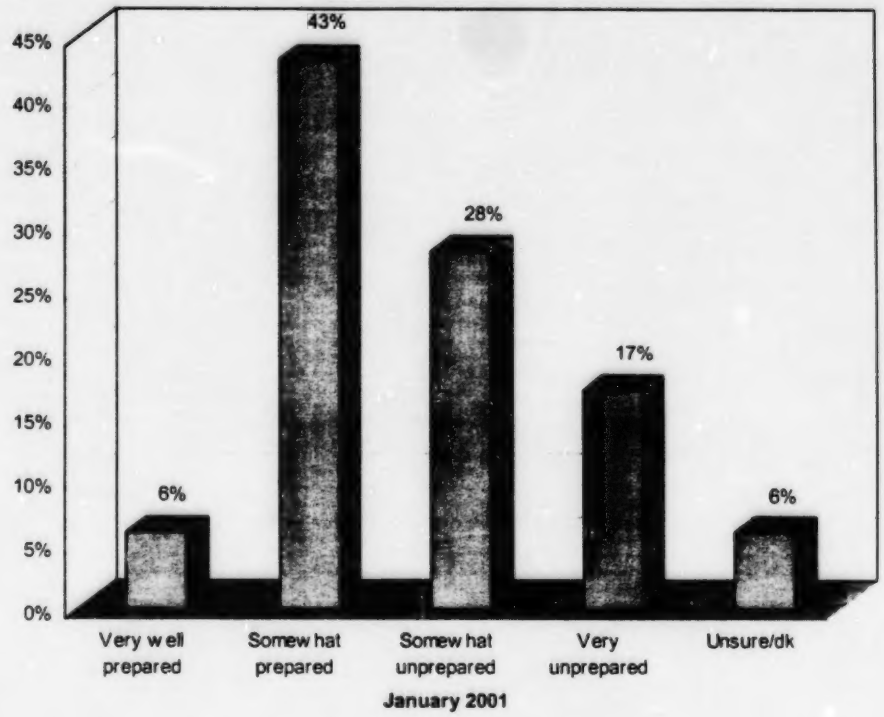
- More than three quarters (78%) of residents think the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better.

Question 14. Which best describes how well prepared you think Saskatchewan high school students are for entering post-secondary institutions like colleges or universities? Do you think they are very well prepared, only somewhat prepared, somewhat unprepared or very unprepared?



- Two thirds (67%) of residents think Saskatchewan high school students are prepared for entering post-secondary institutions like colleges or universities.

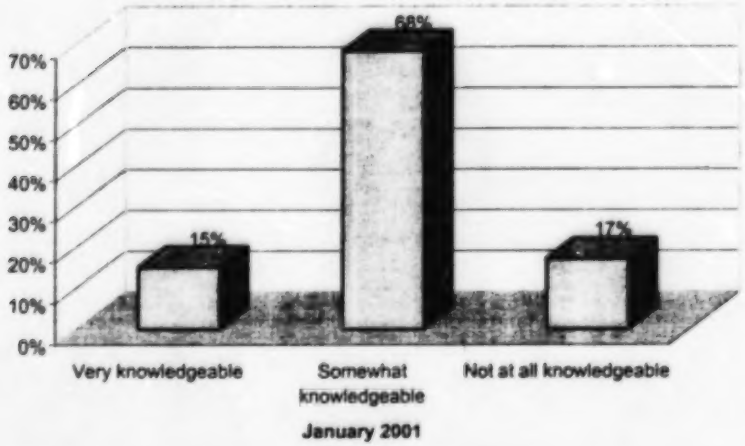
Question 15. How well prepared do you think high school students are for entering the workforce?



- Approximately one half (49%) of residents think Saskatchewan high school students are prepared for entering the workforce.

5.0 HEALTH CARE

Question 16. Saskatchewan health care provides full and partial coverage for a wide range of health programs and services. How would you describe your level of knowledge about which health care services are paid for, in full or in part, by Saskatchewan Health?



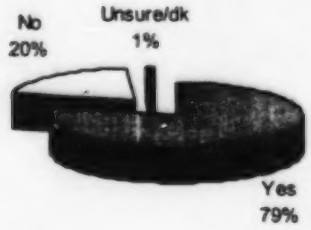
January 2001

- The large majority (83%) of residents indicate they are at least somewhat knowledgeable about which health care services are paid for in full or in part by Saskatchewan Health.

Question 17. Would you like to have more information about the services that are covered by Saskatchewan health care?

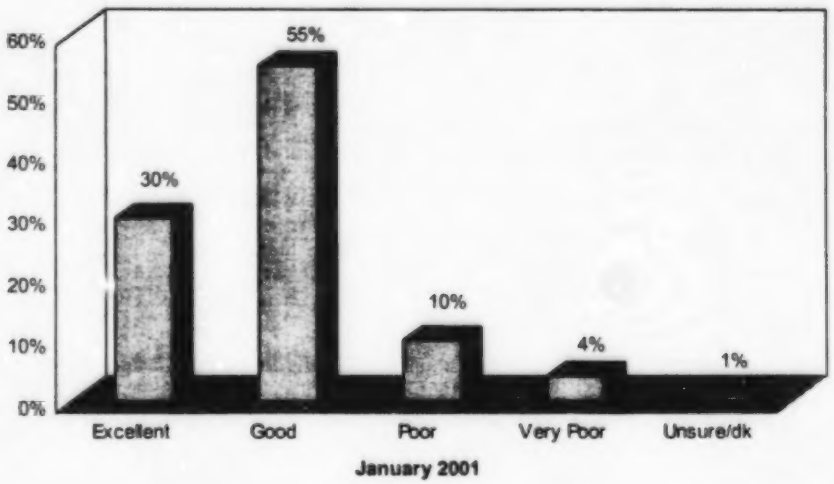
- The majority (61%) of residents would like to have more information about the services that are covered by Saskatchewan health care.

Question 18. Have you or any member of your immediate family received health services in the past 12 months?



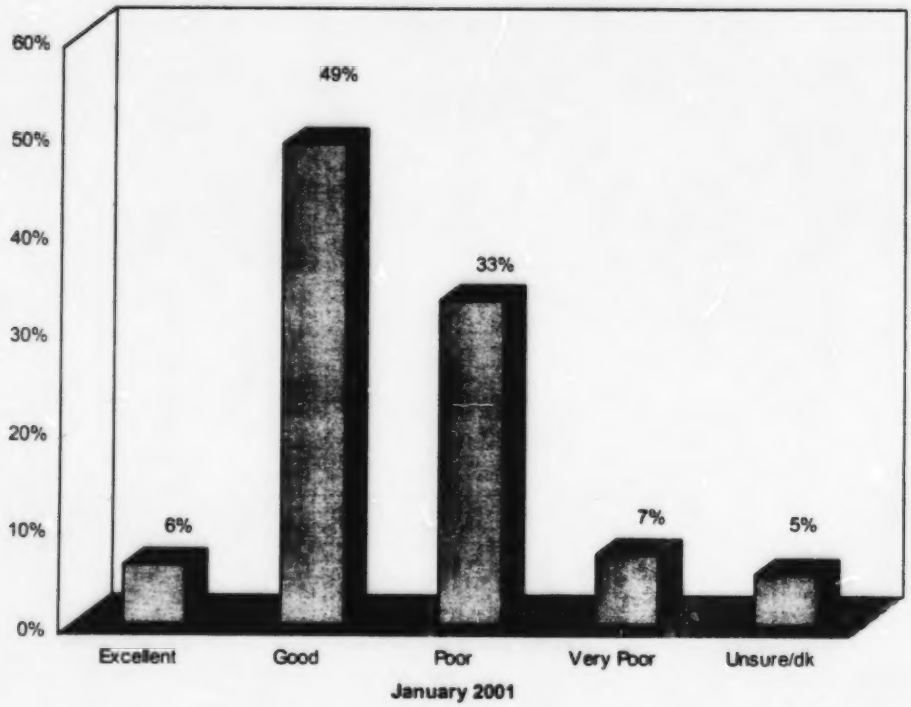
- More than three quarters (79%) of Saskatchewan residents indicate they or a family member have received health care services in the past 12 months.

Question 19. How would you rate the quality of health care services you or your family members have received in the past 12 months?



- The large majority of residents (85%) rate the quality of health services they or their family members have received in the past 12 months as either excellent or good.

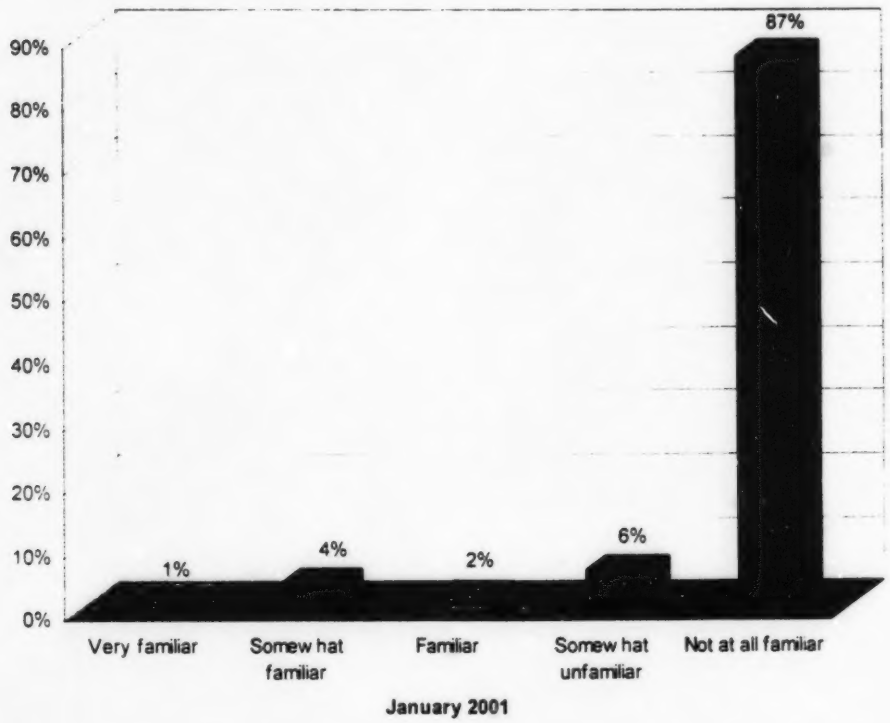
Question 20. Overall, how would you rate the current level of health services provided in the province? Would you say they are excellent, good, poor or very poor?



- The majority (55%) of Saskatchewan residents rate the current level of health services provided in the province as either excellent or good.

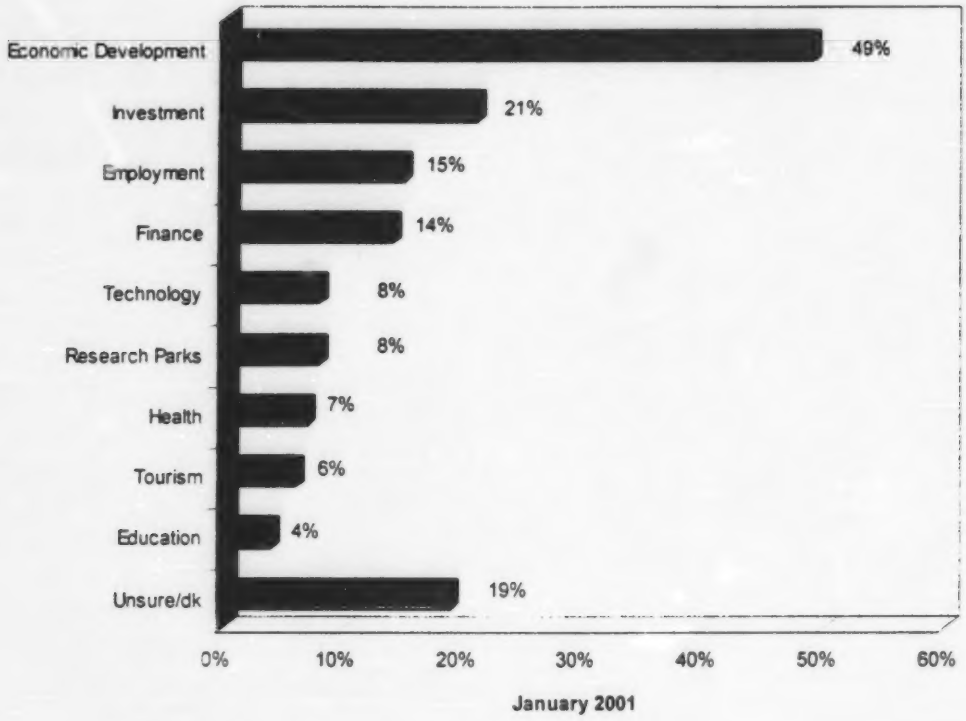
6.0 SASKATCHEWAN OPPORTUNITIES CORPORATION

Question 21. How familiar are you with the Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation, also called SOCO?



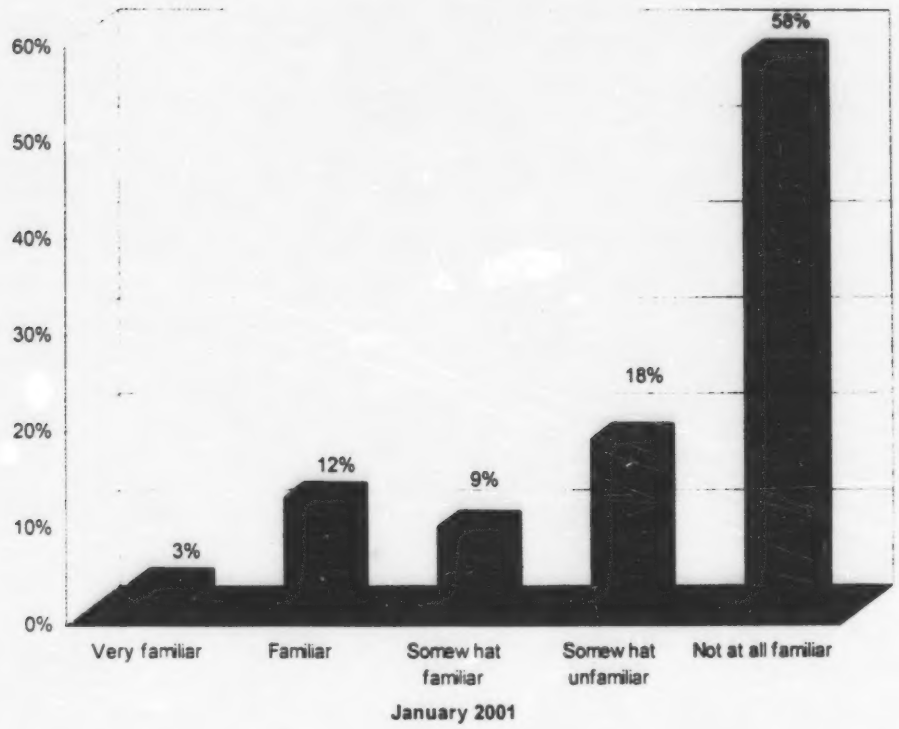
- The large majority (87%) of residents are not at all familiar with the Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation.

Question 22. What business is SOCO in?



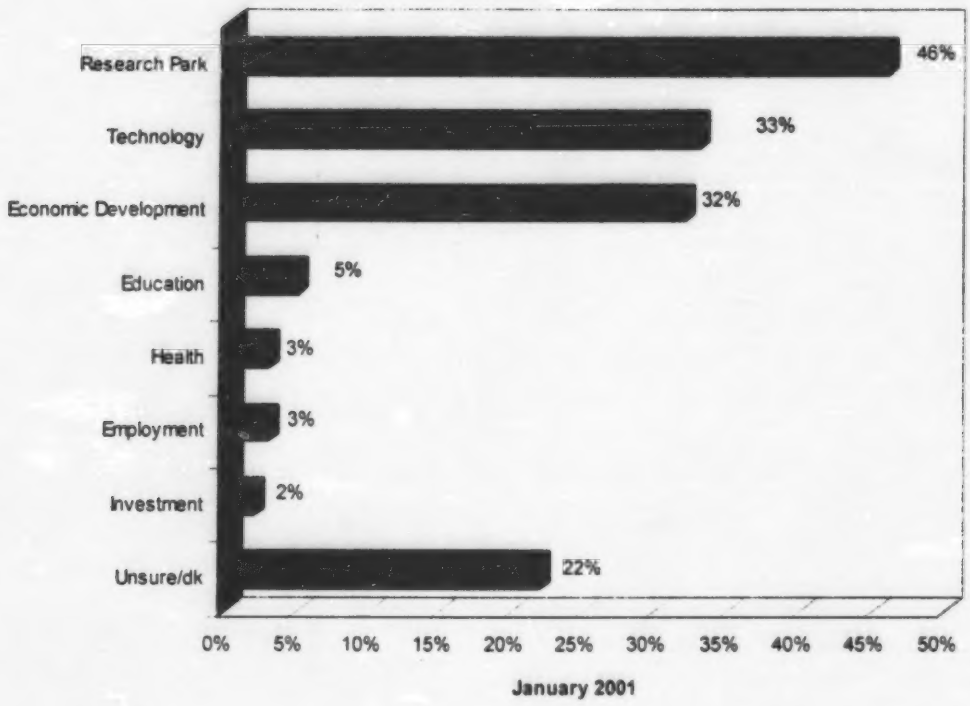
- Approximately one half (49%) of those respondents who are familiar with SOCO think the organization is involved in economic development (4% of all respondents), 21% think SOCO is involved in investments (2% of all respondents), 15% say employment (1% of all respondents) and 14% think SOCO is involved in the finance industry (1% of all respondents).

Question 23. How familiar are you with Innovation Place in Saskatoon?



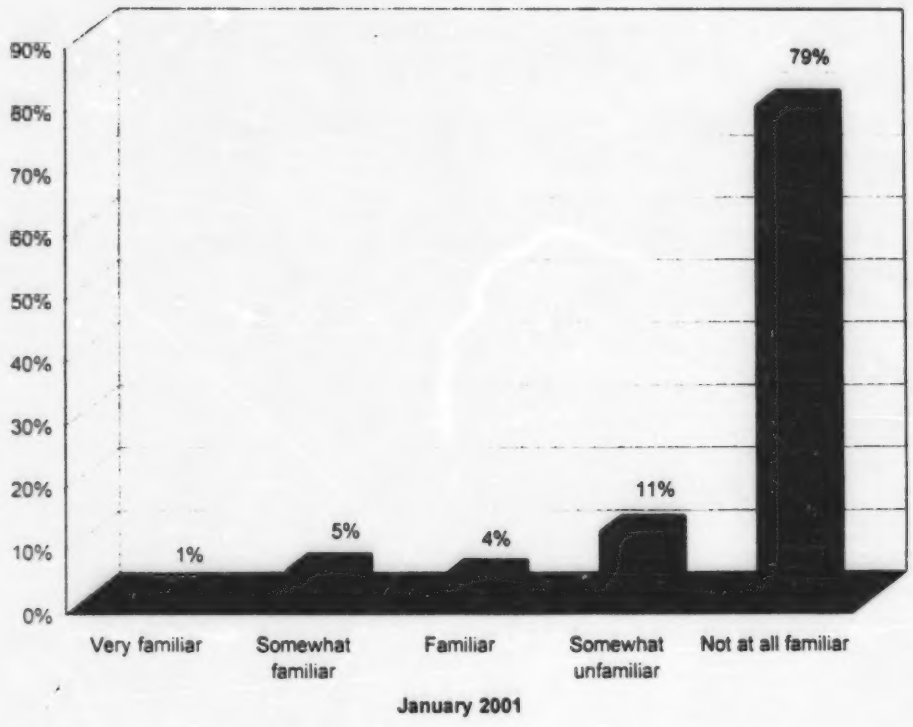
- The majority (58%) of residents are not at all familiar with Innovation Place in Saskatoon. Approximately 24% are at least somewhat familiar with Innovation Place.

Question 24. What is the purpose of Innovation Place?



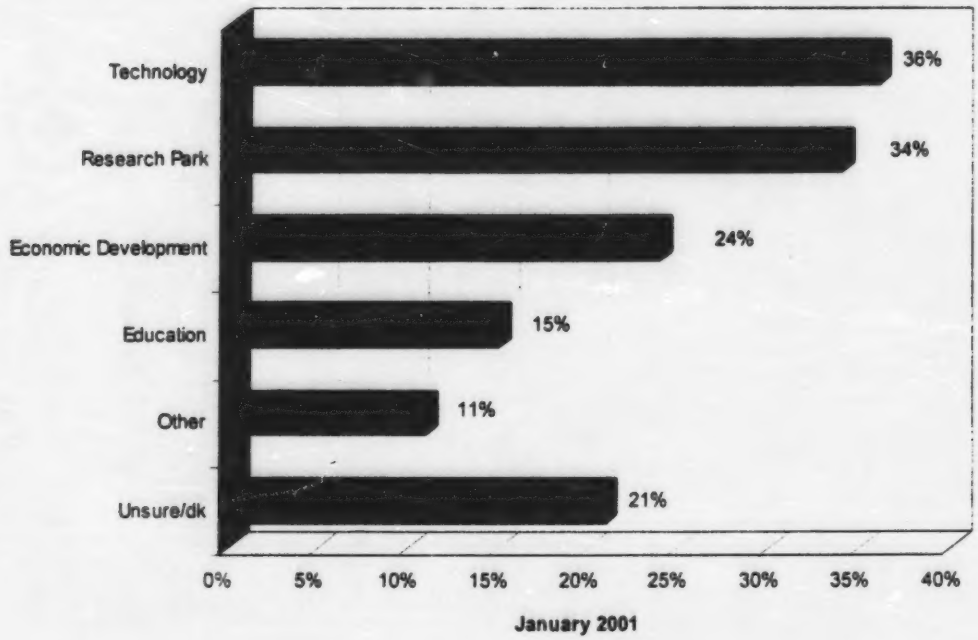
- Approximately 46% of those residents who are familiar with Innovation Place identify it as a research park (11% of all respondents), 33% mention technology (8% of all respondents) and 32% think Innovation Place is involved in economic development (8% of all respondents).

Question 25. How familiar are you with the Regina Research Park?



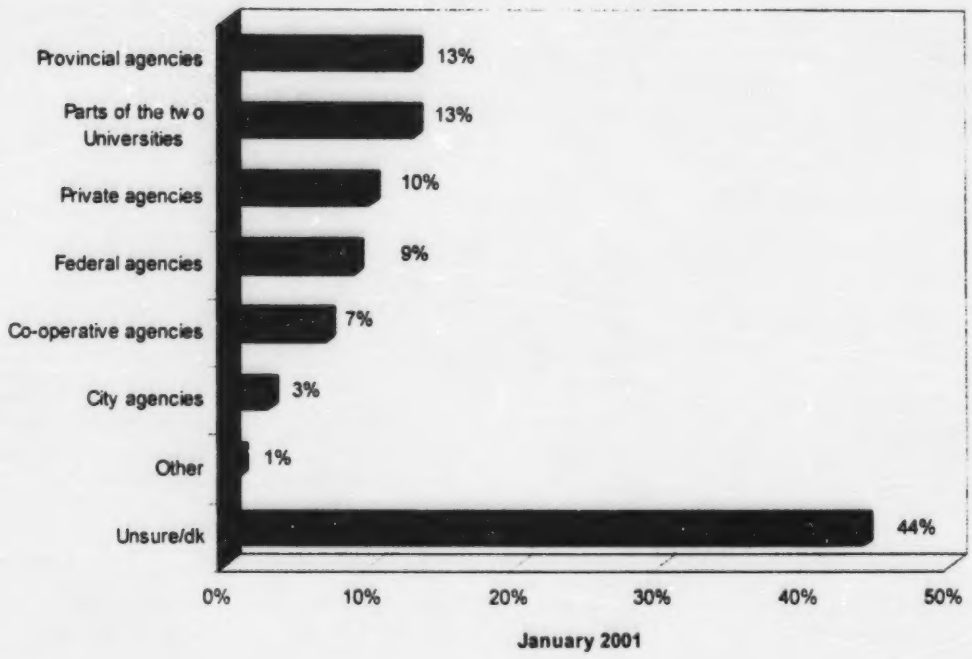
- The large majority (79%) of residents are not at all familiar with the Regina Research Park.

Question 26. What is the purpose of the Regina Research Park?



- More than one third (36%) of those who are familiar with the Regina Research Park identify it as being involved in the technology industry (4% of all respondents), 34% think it is a research park (3% of all respondents) and 24% think Regina Research Park is involved in economic development (2% of all respondents).

Question 27. What type of operations are Innovation Place and the Regina Research Park?

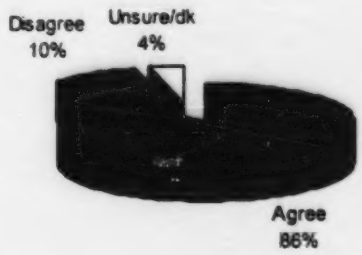


- Approximately 13% of Saskatchewan residents think Innovation Place and the Regina Research Park are provincial agencies, another 13% think they are part of the two Saskatchewan universities, 10% think they are private agencies and 9% mention federal agencies; 44% are unsure.

7.0 MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

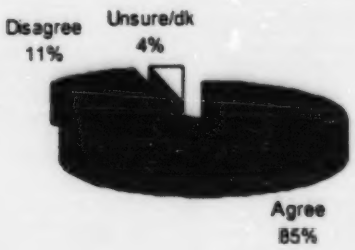
Question 28. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Candidates seeking election to any municipal government position should be required to disclose the sources of their campaign contributions and how those contributions were spent?



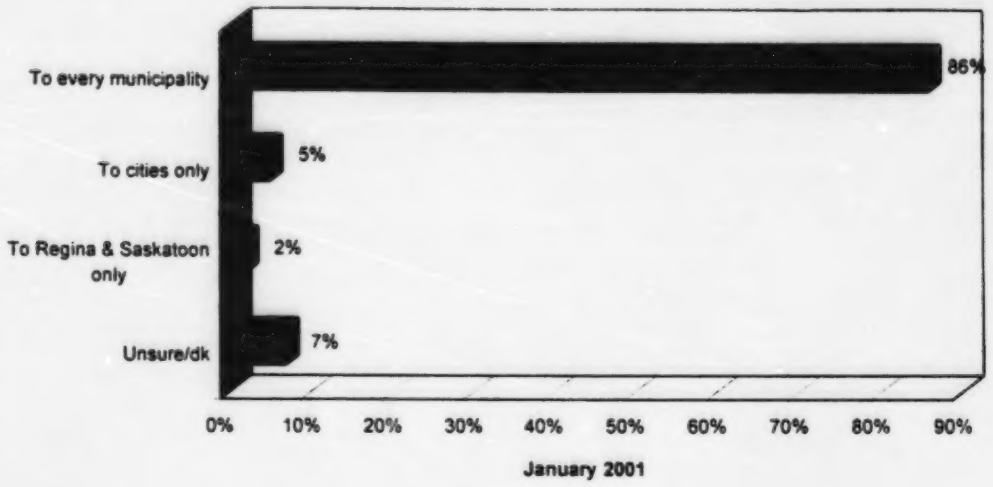
- The large majority (86%) of residents agree that candidates seeking election to any municipal government position should be required to disclose the sources of their campaign contributions and how those contributions were spent.

Limits should be set on the amount of money that can be raised or spent on municipal government elections.



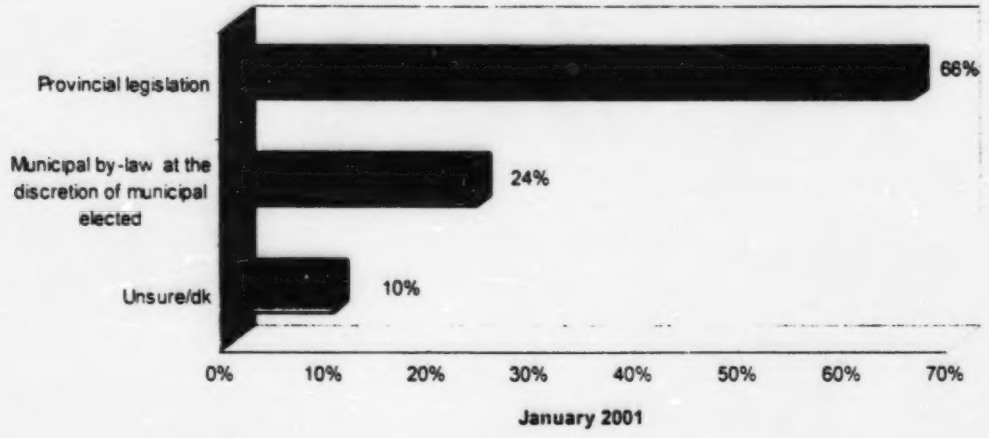
- The large majority (85%) of residents also agree that limits should be set on the amount of money that can be raised or spent on municipal elections.

Question 29. What limitations should apply? Limitations...



- The large majority (86%) think the spending limitations should apply to every municipality in Saskatchewan.

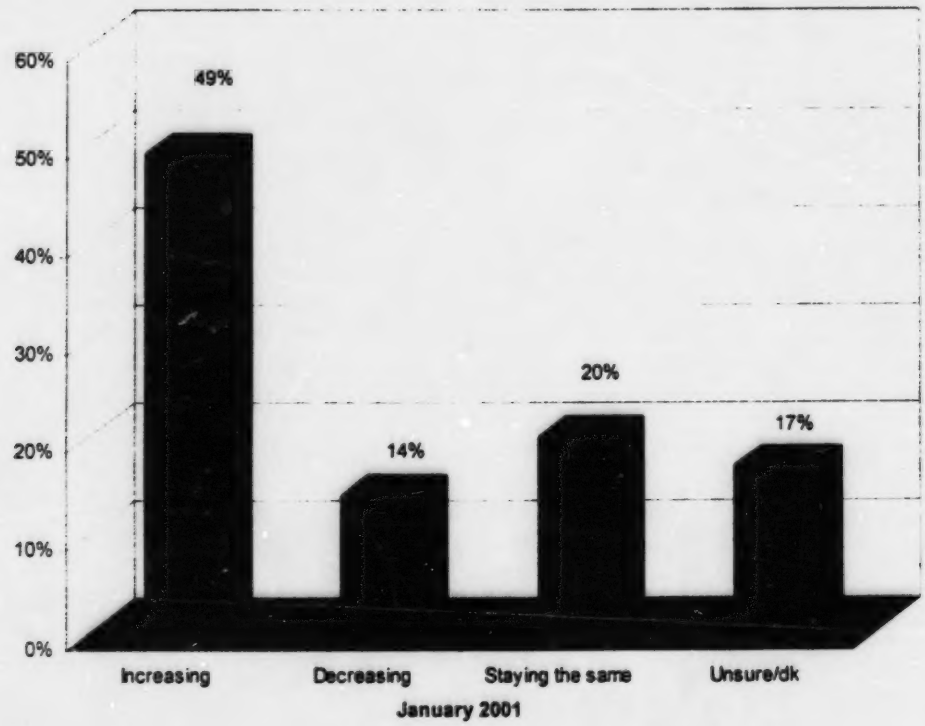
Question 30. These limitations on campaign spending or requirements to disclose sources of contributions should be set by...?



- Two thirds (66%) of residents think the limitations on campaign spending or requirements to disclose sources of contributions should be set by provincial legislation.

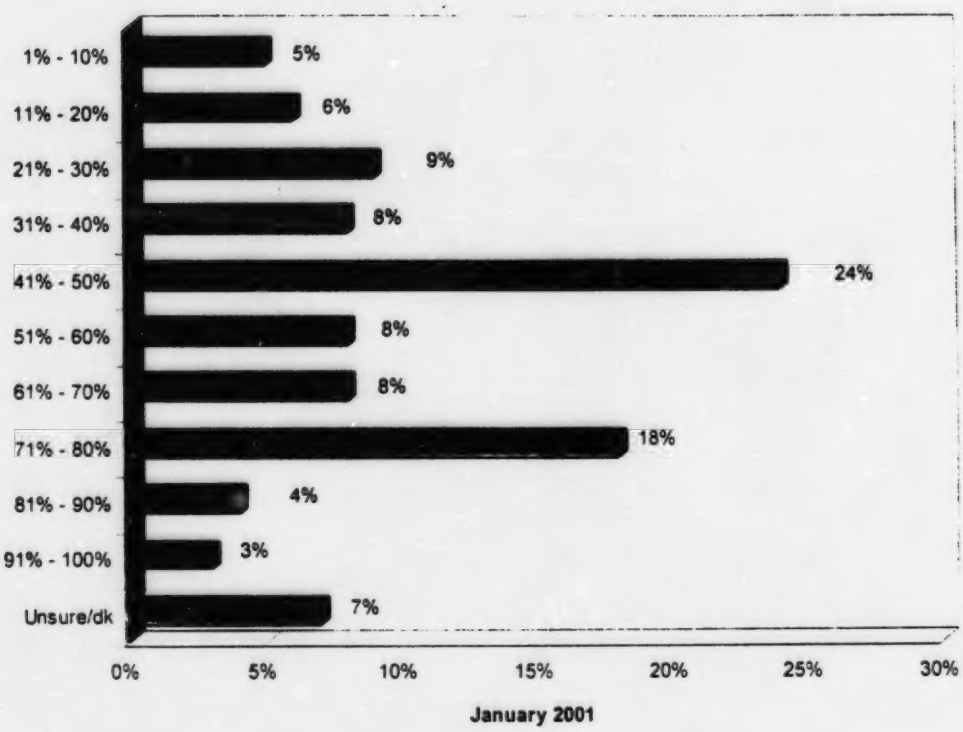
8.0 SOCIAL SERVICES

Question 31. On the whole, would you say the number of people in Saskatchewan receiving welfare have been increasing, decreasing or staying the same over the past four years?



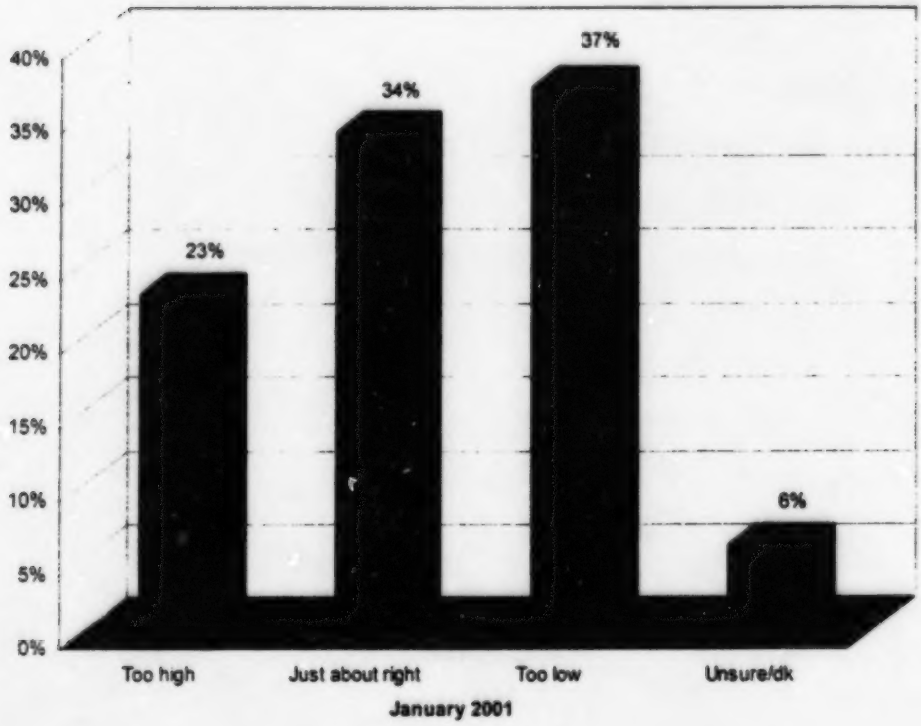
- Almost one half (49%) of Saskatchewan residents think the number of people receiving welfare in the province has been increasing over the last four years.

Question 32. People receiving welfare are classified by whether or not they are able to work. Some recipients have a health-related, family or social reason that prevents them from working. What percentage of people receiving welfare do you think are able to work?



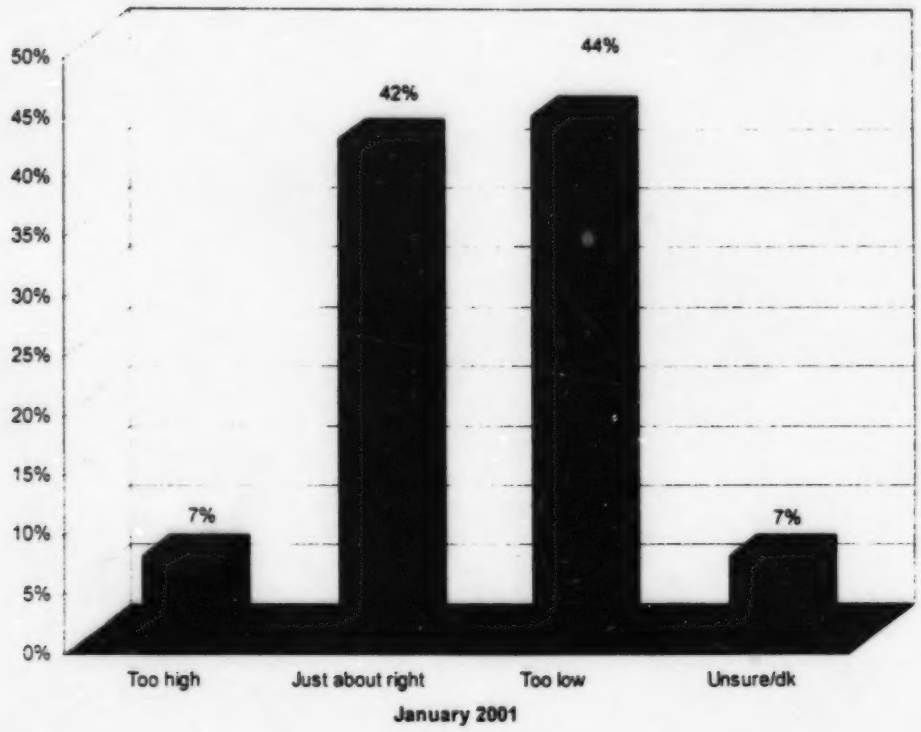
- The majority of residents (52%) think up to 50% of those people currently receiving welfare are able to work; 41% think more than 50% are able to work.

Question 33. A single person who is able to work and doesn't have children receives on average $357 a month from welfare. Do you think the rates for a single employable person without children are too high, too low, or just about right?



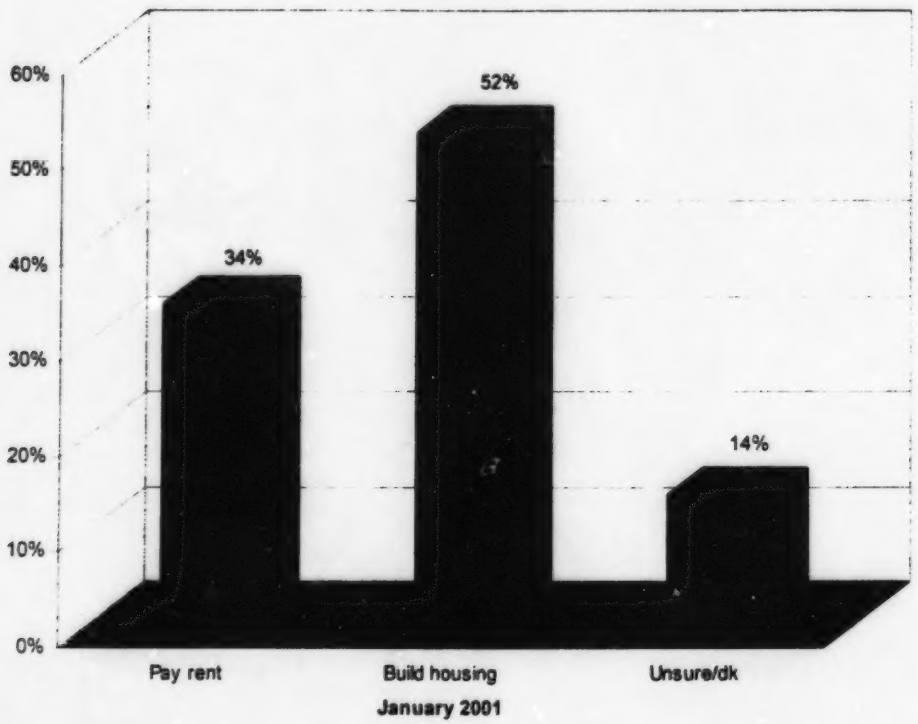
- The plurality (37%) of residents think the rates for a single employable person without children are too low, 23% think the rates are too high and 34% think the rates are just about right.

Question 34. A single mother with two children receives about $705 a month from welfare, in addition to child benefits of approximately $421. Do you think the rates for a single mother with two children are too high, too low or just about right?



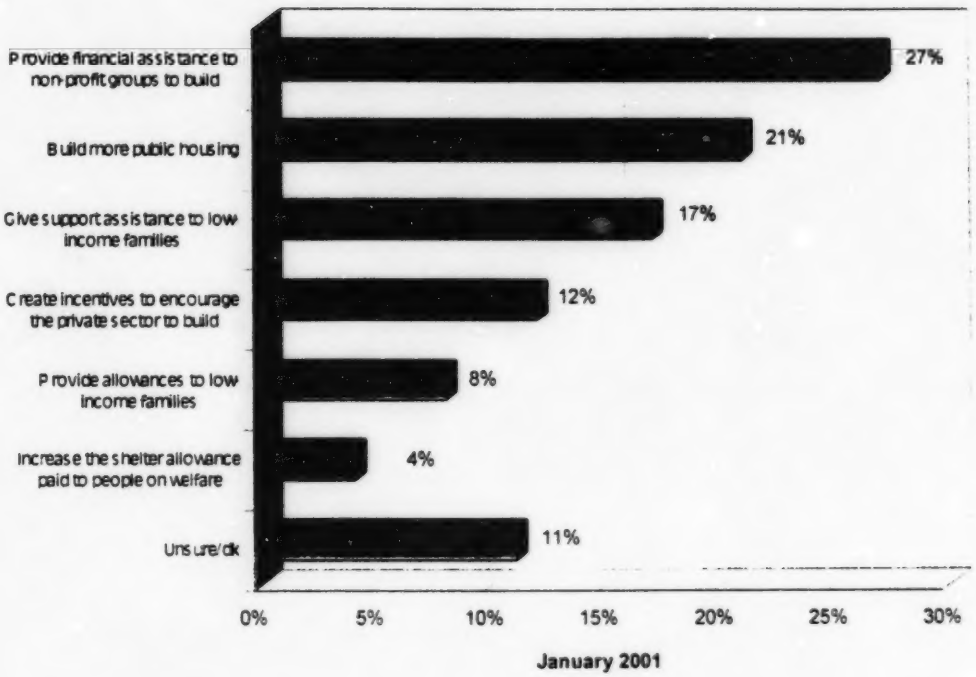
- Approximately 44% of Saskatchewan residents think the rates for a single mother with two children are too low, 7% think the rates are too high while 42% think the rates are just about right.

Question 35. Currently, money is provided to people on welfare to cover basic costs of living and housing. Do you think the housing portion of this money should go to pay rent or should it go toward building affordable public housing instead?



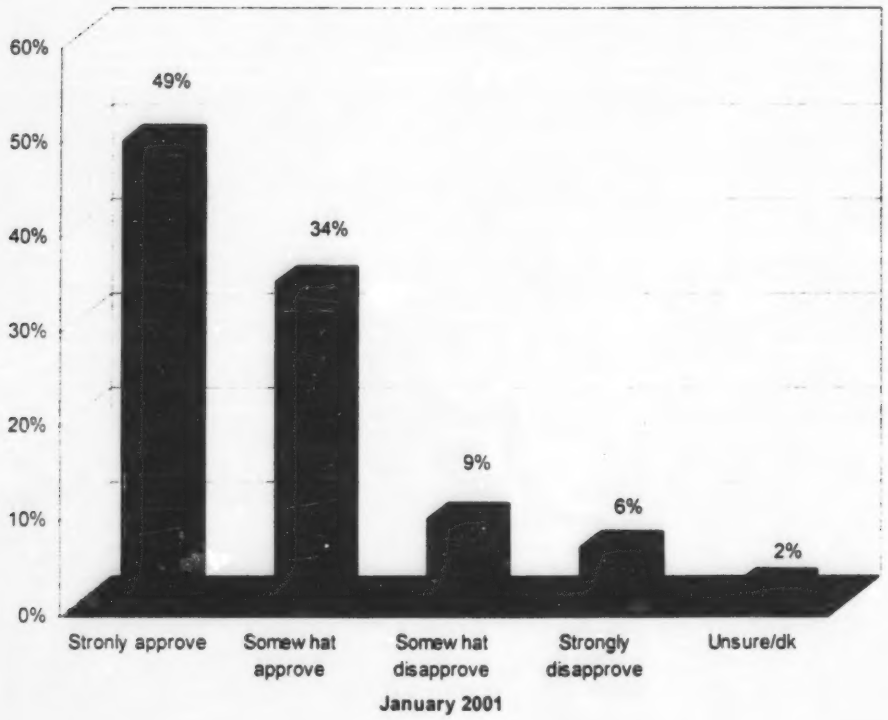
- The majority (52%) of residents think the housing portion of this money should go toward building affordable public housing.

Question 36. In some parts of the province, there is currently a shortage of quality, affordable housing for low-income families. What is the best thing government can do to deal with this situation?



- More than one quarter (27%) of residents think the government should provide financial assistance to non-profit groups to build more affordable housing. Approximately 21% think the government should build more public housing, 17% think they should give support assistance to low-income families and 12% think the government should create incentives to encourage the private sector to build more affordable housing for low-income families.

Question 37. In 1998, the government introduced programs for low-income families to make it easier for them to stay working and avoid falling back onto welfare. For example, low-income working families now receive health benefits, such as dental care for their children, that they would receive on assistance but not if they were working in a low-income job. Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove or strongly disapprove of this approach?



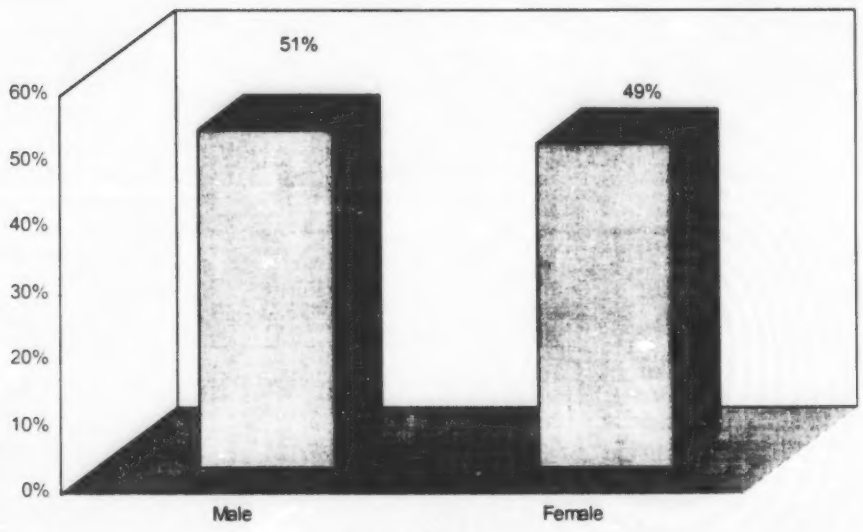
- The large majority (83%) of Saskatchewan residents approve of programs for low-income families to make it easier for them to stay working and avoid falling back onto welfare.

APPENDIX II SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

The omnibus public opinion sample frame is constructed to facilitate proportionate representation of various demographic characteristics evident within the province of Saskatchewan. This ensures that opinions of all the various types of residents in Saskatchewan are proportionately represented in the statistical measurements documented in this report. The demographic distributions from the survey sample generally parallel the province's actual population distributions, as measured by Statistics Canada census data.

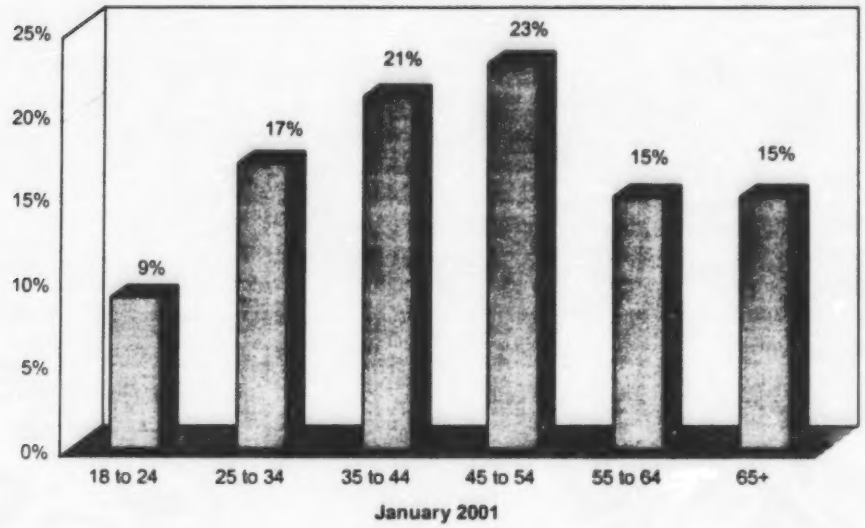
The omnibus survey sample size of 1,000 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error for the point estimates contained in this report of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Survey sample gender distribution

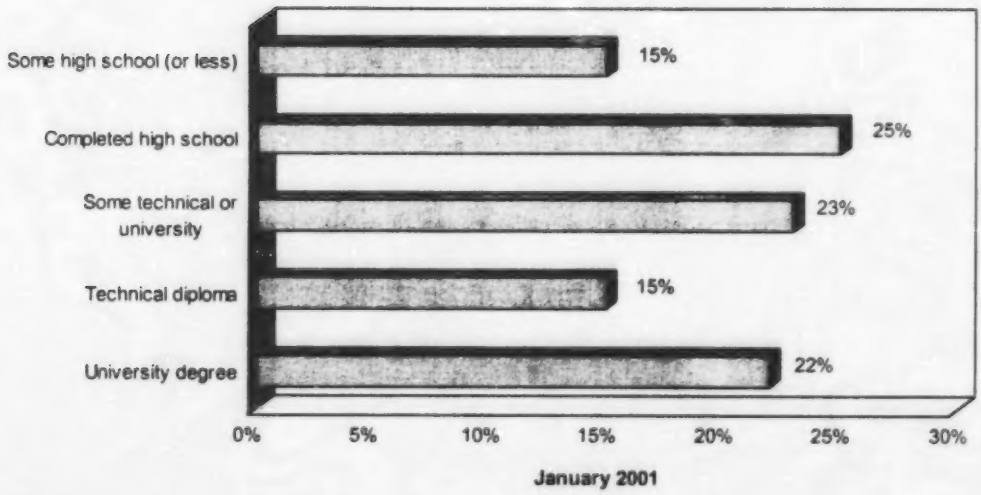


January 2001

Survey sample age distribution



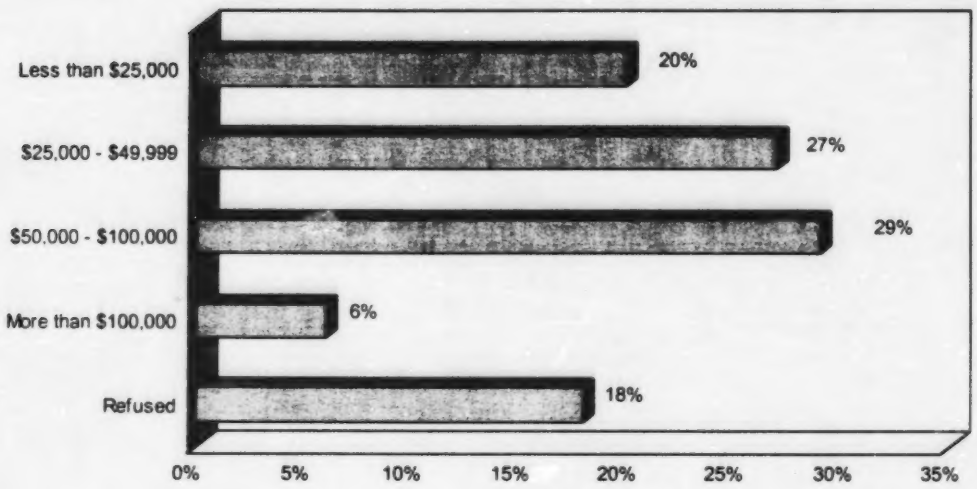
Survey sample education distribution



Survey sample occupation distribution

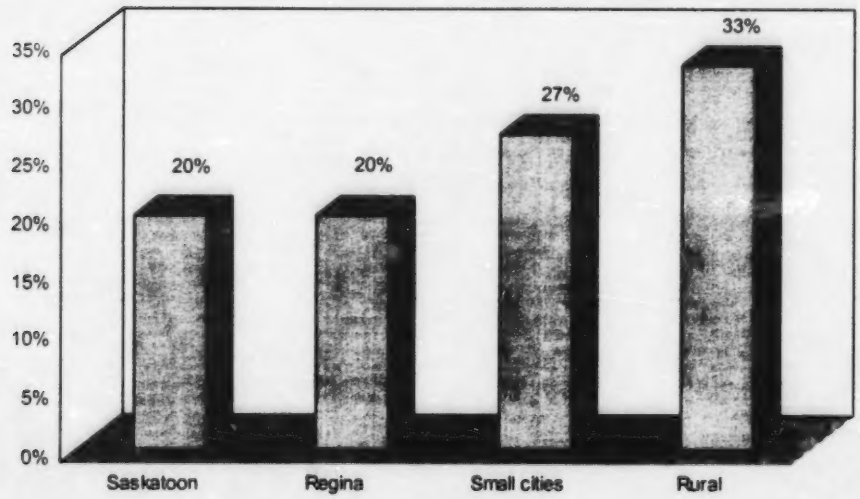
January 2001

Survey sample income distribution



January 2001

Survey sample regional distribution



January 2001